

## WOUNDED AT GETTYSBURG

...**A**N examination of Crittenden's wounds revealed the fact that five conical balls had entered his body, one of which has passed entirely through the upper lobe of the right lung. According to his account, when within a short distance of the enemy's lines, he seized the colors from the hands of a dying sergeant, and with his first step forward received what seemed to him to be a fearful blow in the breast, and he fell senseless to the ground. He knew nothing more until he was aroused by the rough shake of a Federal soldier, who, seeing that life was not extinct, gave him a drink of water, placed his cap under his head as a pillow, and muttering, "Poor boy, this is the last of you," went forward to his duty. He then lapsed into a state of unconsciousness, which finally passed into a dream of the charge so vivid and real that it seemed that he was for hours storming the enemy's line with balls whistling and shells bursting and comrades falling around him, while his chest felt as if it were encircled with an iron band which interfered with respiration and almost deprived him of the power of speech. When he came to himself again it was in the early morning, and a group of surgeons were standing about him while one was examining his wounds, who, seeing that he had regained consciousness, asked his name, told him to prepare for death as his wounds were mortal, and said to him: "I know your brother by reputation, and if you have any last message to send to your family tell it to me, and I will have it delivered in time. My heart bleeds for you and yours, my poor boy." "Say to them at home," gasped the dear fellow, "that I tried to do my duty, and tell my mother"—here he lost consciousness again, and was unable to complete the sentence. Although the surgeons regarded the case as desperate, they did not leave him to die alone in the grass where he had fallen, but they had him carefully lifted into an ambulance and transported to the nearest field-hospital, where he was placed under a shelter hastily improvised of fence-rails, and given food, stimulants, and an opiate—the jolting of the vehicle over the newly-ploughed field having restored him to consciousness, and caused him the most intense suffering. During the night a new peril presented itself: the stream which ran through the hospital suddenly swelled beyond its

borders, and with resistless impetus swept a large number of the wounded to destruction. He, fortunately, was just beyond the invaded area and was saved, while one of his own men—a poor lad reared near my plantation in North Carolina—who lay wounded and helpless by his side, was swept away by the flood. As he did not die, he was removed after a few days to a division hospital, which was well constructed and abundantly supplied. Here he was allowed two slightly wounded men from his own company as nurses, supplied liberally with nutritious soup and good bread, and given a dose of morphia every night at bed time; but his wounds were not dressed, and his bloody and matted clothing was never changed until he was discovered and taken charge of by my brother, Dr. L. P. Warren, more than two weeks after the battle. There was no intentional inhumanity in this, for in every other respect he was kindly treated, but it resulted simply from the fact, that when brought from the field he was placed on the list of the “mortally wounded,” and as surgeons were scarce and wounded men abundant, he was left to die in peace without the additional pang of a surgical dressing. This view of the case proved “a blessing in disguise”—was a circumstance so fortunate in itself and in its consequences as to bear the aspect of a special dispensation—for the lung wound, consequently, sealed itself hermetically, while the non-intervention of the doctors perpetuated that condition of quiescence which was most favorable to its cicatrization.

Warren, E.: *A Doctor's Experiences in Three Continents*. Baltimore, Cushings and Bailey, 1885, pp. 17-19.